

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette everything is figureoutable

February 8, 2018



The Renoir hat trick

By Joel Miller

I beg to differ

By Richard Titus

I share the frustration with U.S. politics today [*The Voice*, January 11], but I don't blame it on Trump. We all knew who he was, and what he would do if elected. Now he's doing it; anyone who's surprised simply hasn't been paying attention.

For me the villains are the Democratic Party insiders who engineered the candidacy of Hillary Clinton. The opinion polls had made it quite clear that – against the most preposterous opponent in U.S. history – Mrs. Clinton would win narrowly, or perhaps even lose. For many Americans she was not liked and not trusted.

Moreover, her candidacy took off the table some otherwise valuable issues. Trump's super rich, but so is she. Trump's a war hawk, so is she. Trump has no interest in civil liberties and income inequality, neither does she. Trump has no government experience; starting from Mrs. Clinton's total flop as "co-President" to husband Bill, her "experience" is mainly a product of her publicists' imagination.

The Democrats responsible for our current misery accept no responsibility and want to blame it all on Moscow. Sadly, they are still in control of the party apparatus. The American version of the two-party system is not serving us well and may be incapable of reform. 📧

The Montebello Voice wants to hear from you

By Carole Appel

In the January 25 issue of *The Voice*, Ralph Johnson incorrectly states that some immigrants to the United States are "chosen by lottery with no consideration to our needs, cost, safety and security."

Here are the facts about the screening process for refugees, quoted from *Time* magazine, November 17, 2015:

Our government performs its own intensive screening, a process that includes consultation from nine different government agencies. They meet weekly to review a refugee's case file and, if appropriate, determine where in the U.S. the individual should be placed. When choosing where to place a refugee, officials consider factors such as existing family in the U.S., employment possibilities and special factors like access to needed medical treatment. How do we know the refugees aren't terrorists? Every refugee goes through an intensive vetting process, but the precautions are increased for Syrians. Multiple law enforcement, intelligence and security agencies perform "the most rigorous screening of any traveler to the U.S.," says a senior administration official. Among the agencies involved are the State Department, the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security. A DHS officer conducts in-person interviews with every applicant. Biometric information such as fingerprints are collected and matched against criminal databases. Biographical information such as past visa applications are scrutinized to ensure the applicant's story coheres.

Just over 50 percent of applicants pass the process, which takes from 18 to 24 months on average. 📧

Upcoming electronics and hazardous household materials recycling

By Sophie and Sarah Myers

Our next recycling date is February 17. We are available to pick up items from your unit on Friday, February 16 between 7 and 8 p.m., or Saturday, February 17 between 9 and 10 a.m.

If you are not available at those times, you may leave the items in front of your door and we will pick them up, or you are welcome to drop them off at our unit 2-615. Please make sure they are clearly marked with your name and unit number. We accept all electronic and hazardous household items that Fairfax County recycles (and that fit in our van). That includes: electronics such as computers, TVs, phones, printers, cords, and fluorescent light bulbs, rechargeable batteries (not alkaline), paint, solvents, articles that contain mercury, fire extinguishers, and aerosol cans. For hazardous items, please make sure items are sealed and contents is marked.

To sign up for the service or for more information, contact us at montebello_e_cycles@icloud.com 📧

The **MONTEBELLO** **Voice**
 an independent gazette
 Alexandria, Virginia

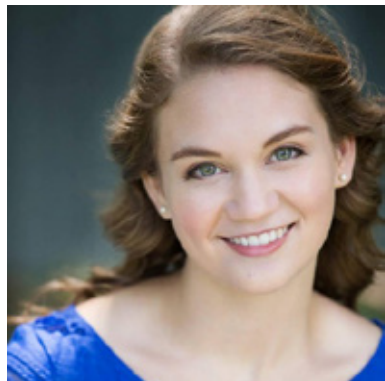
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Music Club announces upcoming concerts

By *Carla Jones-Batka*

The Montebello Music Club announces the beginning of the 2018 concerts with two events in February. We are proud to present Katherine Riddle in a recital of love songs: "All the Things You Are" on Sunday, February 18 at 3 p.m. in the Community Center. The performance is free to the residents and friends. The concert and champagne reception afterward will celebrate the 10th wedding anniversary of Bill Batka and Carla Jones-Batka.



Katherine Riddle

Soprano Katherine Riddle is a crossover singer/actor who has performed in theaters, opera houses and concert halls across the United States and abroad. Recently, Katherine performed with NextStop Theatre Company in Rodgers and Hammerstein's A Grand Night for Singing and worked as the female swing for the Broadway-aimed production of The Secret Garden at Shakespeare Theatre Company. Other recent regional credits include: Metrostage: Christmas at the Old Bull and Bush; Glimmerglass Festival: La Bohème, Sweeney Todd; Annapolis Opera: Madama Butterfly, South Pacific; Weathervane Playhouse: Oklahoma, Les Misérables; Compass Rose Theatre: Brigadoon; Toby's Dinner Theatre: Into the Woods; National Tour (Artspower): Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Katherine made her international concert debut as a soloist in Vivaldi's Gloria, and Handel's Dixit Dominus with the B-A-C-H Orchestra and the Vladimir Symphony Orchestra in Yekaterinburg, Russia. Other symphonic soloist work includes appearances with American Pops Orchestra, Fairfax Symphony and West Virginia Symphony. In 2016, Katherine won the National Society of Arts and Letters

(DC – Musical Theatre) competition. In 2015 she won 2nd place (National) Hal Leonard Competition and was a finalist and Special Award Winner in the internationally acclaimed Lotte Lenya Competition (2017).

Katherine graduated *magna cum laude* in Music (vocal performance) from American University. She studied abroad at Kings College, London and the Royal Academy of Music. She currently studies with soprano Harolyn Blackwell.

On Sunday, February 25 at 3 p.m. you will have the opportunity to enjoy a Piano Recital by Young Artists in the Com-

munity Center. This has become an annual presentation by the Montebello Music Club. Most of the pianists are students of Elizabeth Lane, a teacher at the Levine School and private piano teacher. She loves presenting her students at Montebello because they get to perform on our wonderful Steinway piano and our residents are such an appreciative audience. We also have students who live at Montebello performing for us. Come and enjoy!

We have elected our officers for the year: Carla Jones-Batka, president; Carol Coyle-Shea, secretary; Pam Howell, treasurer; and David Ransom, member-at-large. Patty Pulju will continue as accompanist and leader. We look forward to all residents suggesting programs they'd like to hear. 📞

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Questions? just call Cell: 516-459-8504 or email: virgyoga@verizon.net

First class is always free
(\$8/pp per class)

The kids can't play

By *Arnie Haiman*

I'm a soccer grandparent. That means I get to go to all the games, but I don't have to do any of the work – no organizing, no phone trees, no car pooling, no coaching. It's a sweet deal.

So imagine my chagrin at a recent game when the coach called all the parents to the sidelines before the game to tell them, "the kids can't play."

Now I assumed when he summoned them that they were about to get the standard lecture about good sportsmanship on the sidelines...no booing, no shouting at the refs, no advice to the players. I guess I don't have a problem with that, although sometimes it borders on "no cheering," which strikes me as overkill. But hey, I'm a spectator and if it helps the kids to see their parents well-behaved, I'm not going to carp about it.

But that wasn't the coach's message. The kids couldn't play because the other team, in full regalia, on time and rarin' to go, didn't have their registration cards, a *sine qua non* of organized soccer leagues.

Now if I were just interested in scoring points, I would deliver a full-throated jeremiad about over-protective "helicopter" parents, the fact that kids today don't know how to just go out and make their own fun, that their parents have their time too structured and too organized. And the specter of telling two dozen kids that they couldn't have a game really did rankle me.

"They have feet, don't they? Of course they can play! What's wrong with these adults?!"

The fact is, there was nothing wrong with the adults at all. It doesn't surprise me that someone forgot to bring the necessary paperwork. In fact, I'm continually amazed at how many things today's parents successfully juggle to ensure that their kids can take advantage of the opportunities bombarding them. Do they sometimes overdo it? Sure. Do

they sometimes forget to just let the kids be kids? I think they do.

But in their defense, at least with the demographics with which I'm familiar, these are mostly families with both parents working outside the home. It's understandable, and even commendable, that they do not want their jobs/careers to cause the kids to miss out. So if they overcompensate, it's with the best of intentions. Yes, there are always a few who are living out their own disappointments, thinking their kids are on their way to the big leagues, and

pushing them too hard, but they do not represent the majority that I see.

And by the way, they didn't need any grumpy old grandpa in the grandstands to tell them how to figure it out. The kids did play. Under the league rules, the team without the paperwork had to forfeit. The (paid) referee could not officiate, so one of the parents stepped in. He even had a whistle! And their scrimmage was as good as any official game could be. Maybe better – my grandkid scored a goal. And isn't that what it's all about? 🍷



Roya and Amaris Denaei

Photo by Dian McDonald

potluck



potluck



By *Mikhailina Karina*
Photos courtesy of
Catherine Cooke

Although she often feels like Gumby, the green rubber toy being pulled in different directions, Catherine Cooke has mastered the art of finding calm in the midst of chaos. This quality is captured in a painting of Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor that hangs in her home. It is an impressionistic, colorful depiction of the multitude of lights shimmering from high-rise buildings that surround the still, dark body of water.

Three inches under five feet in height, Catherine's quiet and reserved nature quickly dissolves into smiles and warmth when she talks about her Kindergarteners at Parklawn Elementary School in Annandale. As an assistant teacher with 25 5-year-olds, she frequently silently recites the Serenity Prayer to keep her cool while being tugged, pulled, and poked by little hands. Hence the Gumby metaphor. She relies on the "wonderful breathing exercises" on her phone's Calm app. "We also practice this occasionally with the students at carpet time," she says.

Working with 5-year-olds is both incredibly challenging and rewarding. "They are full of love," Catherine says. "There aren't many jobs where you can get 25 hugs and I love you's every morning. These children become our own."

Although "there are no racial walls" in a school where students come from 37 countries and speak 34 different languages, there are language barriers, she says, with nearly half of stu-

George Noory, Gene Krizek and Joseph Cooke represent the United States Air Force in Montebello's Independence Day Parade 2013

The Montebello Voice



dents English language learners and almost two-thirds qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In addition, "many parents are juggling family and jobs, cannot speak English, so assistance with homework is limited."

Working with young children has taught Catherine some simple truths. "Always be a good example to your children. They are watching and listening,"



An avid outdoorswoman, Catherine Cooke hiking the Old Rag Mountain in the Shenandoah National Park

she says. "Pretty is as pretty does. Always be kind and forgiving."

At the end of the day, "we are all 5 years old at heart. The world is an amazing, wonderful place! We just need to keep our eyes and ears open. We take so many things for granted," she says. "A squirrel's nest, ants, and butterflies are the most exciting things on earth to them."

Catherine is comfortable in Northern Virginia's mixing bowl of different ethnicities because it reminds her of her own childhood as a newcomer to a foreign land.

Catherine was 8 months old when her family moved to Hong Kong in the early 1960s and for the next 20 years, this city of 5 million people crammed into 426 square miles was home. Her father, Joseph Cooke, was an intelligence officer in the Air Force, but later worked as vice-president of Merrill Lynch, Hong Kong for more than two decades.

The family lived in a high-rise with two nannies who took care of three



Parents Joseph and Iris at the baptism of baby brother Geoff with sisters Carolyn and Catherine

man and deliberately tried to fail the entrance exam. “But my father still got us in,” she laughs, “and it turned out to be the best thing in our lives.”

The school’s principal, Herr Tie-mann, was a terrifying figure. Catherine does an exaggerated (and likely accurate) imitation of his angry German voice. “He even clicked his heels!” Catherine brings out the yearbook to show how multicultural the school was. Her tiny graduation class had just eight people.

Slipping into a snooty British accent, she laughs recalling her English teacher, “a proper British lady who was *horrified* there was an American in her classroom. She was *aghast* that everything I was writing was spelled incorrectly.” She was told to bring a dictionary to school. The next day, when Catherine showed up with a Merriam-Webster, the teacher threw a fit. “What is this piece of rubbish?” Unbeknownst to Catherine, the only real English dictionary was the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

To escape from the crush of people and traffic, Catherine’s family made

daily trips to a horse farm an hour away in the country side. Now when she goes back to class reunions, she cannot imagine bringing up children in such an environment. Today’s Hong Kong has grown to 7.3 million people in the same space.

Every three years, the family traveled to the United States to visit relatives in a small town. “It was heaven to be on a mountain with grass,” she says. But Hong Kong was home. “It was alive 24/7 with everyone rushing, rushing, rushing and the horns blaring. You know you’re not significant, but just a small grain of rice.” Life in the United States makes people more self-centered and isolated, she says, whereas in Hong Kong you constantly had people around you.

During those voyages to the States, the family stopped off in Europe to visit London, Rome, Athens, Barcelona, and Switzerland. Her favorite place was Rome, where she fell in love with art and had her rosary beads blessed by the Pope during a Mass.

Catherine decided to attend college in Virginia, near her relatives in Lynchburg. Sight unseen, she landed at the Randolph-Macon Woman’s College because of its equestrian program. The college brochure said it was a “thriving metropolis,” but she was shocked to dis-

children. Because her parents were strict about children making messes, she spent the first few years eating with her nannies. “Chinese was my first language,” she says. “They called me *mui-mui*, which means little girl.”

She shows a photo of her Kindergarten class, in which she is the only non-Chinese girl. Although she’s lost most of her speaking ability, Catherine still understands the language. When she gets together with her brother and sister, they have fun saying all the bad Chinese words from their childhood.

Catherine then attended the American school until seventh grade, which was “a very expensive party central” with students cutting classes to go to the beach and coming home obviously sunburned. It was the 1970s. Although Catherine was “straight-laced” and never got in trouble, their parents decided the no-nonsense German Swiss International School would be a more appropriate academic environment. Neither she nor her brother spoke Ger-

Faces from all nations at the German-Swiss International School in Hong Kong. Catherine is in front row, third from the right.



cover no public transportation and lots of farms. Because of the rigorous academic program at the German school, she was well prepared. But adjusting to the “socially cliquish Southern” culture was difficult until she found a group of like-minded “nerdy losers.” Nevertheless, she says it was “very empowering” to attend a women-only college in the early 1980s for “an education without distractions.” Catherine majored in biology and art.

While working as a graphic designer at an advertising firm in Richmond, she had three sons. Today Matthew, 27, and Tommy, 24, still live in Richmond; Christopher, 20, is in Alexandria. Choosing to become a full-time mom, Catherine quit her job and became a reliable PTA volunteer. “You’re always here anyway,” the principal told her one day, “you might as well get on the payroll.” To become an instructional assistant, she received training to work with special education students as well as a long-term substitute teacher.

When Joseph and Iris Cooke, Catherine’s parents, moved to Montebello in 1989, they were shocked to meet very old, very dear friends. They’d known Gene and Addy Krizek since serving in Korea in 1954. But they were especially



The Cooke siblings, Catherine, Geoff and Carolyn, celebrating Geoff’s wedding in St. Bart’s.

thrilled to run into Jim and Cissie Jordan, Catherine’s brother’s godparents with whom they’d lost touch.

Catherine moved to Alexandria four years ago. Her dad passed away in 2014, preceded by mom in 2000. She currently lives in the Building 1 unit her parents owned. Her sister, Carolyn Bland, lives in Building 3.

Living in a high-rise once again, Catherine appreciates the quiet green spaces where she can take long walks. But sometimes she yearns for the hustle and bustle of her eternally teeming native city, where all her senses were overloaded with life’s many colors, smells, and sounds. 🍷

in case of fire



Sergeant Ibrahim Kandeh with resident



Safety and Access Control Manager Earl Roberts with resident



Sergeant Ben Thompson with Helen Lewis

cup of joe



Photos by Dian McDonald

cup of joe

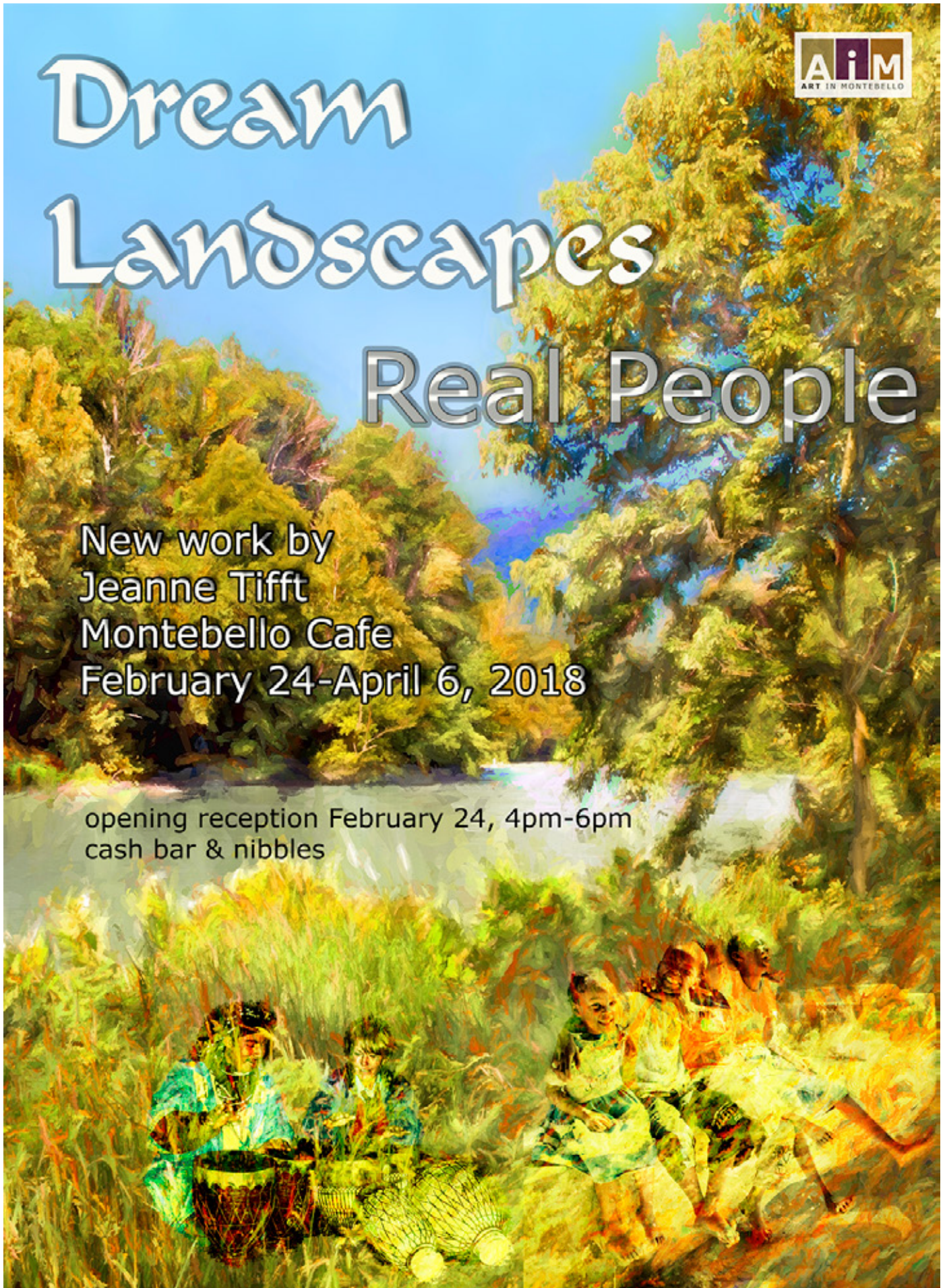




Dream Landscapes Real People

New work by
Jeanne Tift
Montebello Cafe
February 24-April 6, 2018

opening reception February 24, 4pm-6pm
cash bar & nibbles



coming attractions

The SPEAKER SERIES Presents:

SAFETY and ACCESS CONTROL MANAGER, EARL ROBERTS

Who will provide a review of important Montebello security and safety measures.


Topics will include:

- Fires and related challenges
- Extreme weather conditions
- Active shooter emergencies
- Earthquakes and more ...



**Thursday, Feb 15th at 7:30
Community Center Lounge**



Sponsored by the Activities Committee



Chess Game Night with Chess Club

*All Levels & All Ages!
All Welcome!*
Beginners to Grandmasters!
Play! Share! Learn! Practice!


**4th Thursday, Each Month
(generally*)
C.C. Card Room
7:00pm to 9:30pm (latest)**

Bring your own Chess Set if you like! – And, if you're brand new to Chess, but you'd like to check out our Chess Club while playing a relatively "quiet" or "cerebral" game that doesn't "compete" with the ancient game of Chess from a noise perspective, you may bring such a game and hang out with us! (Examples of Games that partner well with Chess: Scrabble, Checkers, Othello, etc.)

Contact Lisa J. Stedge at lisa@stedge.com and/or Nick Nickerson at fnixson@gmail.com for more information.
* (e.g., most holidays and holiday periods are excluded.)

Make your move and stop by to see a joust! The Queen doesn't even mind tardiness!



Wednesday, FEBRUARY 21, 2018

Montebello CLASSIC MOVIE NIGHT

On the Big Screen in the Community Center at 7pm



All the romance, drama, and fantasy you can handle, just for Valentine's Month ...

The Montebello Big Screen has seen nothing to match this for heart-tugging, hankie-filling romance since, well, our last movie night.

FREE old-time Movie Night refreshments, popcorn, and confectionery!

With a brief introduction and back-story on this 1947 movie by Pamela Copley, in this, the sixth of our regular Classic Movies Contact phair@stuedebell.com for more details.

And as a Valentine's Special, we have a Classic Movie Night raffle — no charge to enter — to win the wonderful new book of the romance of Hollywood's longest-lasting couple.

As Montebello Classic Movie Night moves to a new year, we thank you all for making these evenings so special.



Invite you to our film & discussion



HENRY V

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2



In 1944, when England was embroiled in World War II, Laurence Olivier left the Navy to make this film in an effort to boost British morale. It is his adaptation of Shakespeare's history play "Henry V," exemplifying England at war winning under terrible odds. One writer called it "Olivier's call to arms." Olivier produced, directed and acted in this much admired film, with a fine cast and settings inspired by the exquisite illustrations in "Les Très Riches Heures" of the Duc de Berry. In addition to four Oscar nominations, a special Academy Award was created for Olivier and his film.

Caryl Curry will introduce the film and lead the post-movie discussion

final glance



This poor dear was clipped by a car and broke his front leg a couple of years ago. He tried to hide and survive, but we had to call animal control and they put him down. We let him stay at Montebello, but I dug up some of his bones and made a commentary on the deer population. – Bill Bryant